

Message Text

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SUBJECT: JUSTICE MINISTER ZADOK OFFERS PROPOSALS TO STOP LEAKS

SUMMARY: JUSTICE MINISTER HAIM ZADOK, SPEAKING IN THE KNESSET JANUARY 5, CALLED FOR FULL INVESTIGATIONS OF RECENT INCIDENTS INVOLVING LEAKS OF SECRET GOVERNMENT INFORMATION AND PROPOSED STRICT NEW PENALTIES FOR THOSE RESPONSIBLE FOR SUCH LEAKS. HE ANNOUNCED THE ESTABLISHMENT OF A JOINT DOMESTIC SECURITY - IDF - JUSTICE MINISTRY COMMITTEE TO TIGHTEN PROCEDURES FOR PROTECTING OFFICIAL SECRETS AND URGED THE ADOPTION OF A SPECIAL GOI ORDER THAT WOULD ENLARGE THE SCOPE OF GOVERNMENT CENSORSHIP TO INCLUDE POLITICAL AND DIPLOMATIC INFORMATION OF A SENSITIVE NATURE. END SUMMARY.

1. IN A JANUARY 5 KNESSET STATEMENT, JUSTICE MINISTER HAIM ZADOK URGED THE NEWS MEDIA TO EXERCISE RESTRAINT IN THE PUBLICATION OF SECRET INFORMATION OBTAINED THROUGH LEAKS FROM GOVERNMENT SOURCES AND CALLED FOR CHANGES IN EXISTING LEGISLATION THAT WOULD RESULT IN STRICTER PUNISHMENT OF THOSE RESPONSIBLE FOR SUCH LEAKS. ZADOK NOTED THAT CURRENT LEGISLATION MAKES IT A CRIME TO DIVULGE SECRET INFORMATION (WITH IMPRISONMENT OF UP TO FIFTEEN YEARS AS A PENALTY) AND CALLED FOR FULL INVESTIGATIONS OF RECENT INCIDENTS INVOLVING

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LEAKS.

2. ZADOK REVEALED THE FORMATION OF A THREE MEMBER COMMITTEE, REPRESENTING THE SHIN BET (DOMESTIC SECURITY SERVICE), IDF INTELLIGENCE, AND THE JUSTICE MINISTRY, TO TIGHTEN PROCEDURES FOR THE PROTECTION OF OFFICIAL SECRETS AND TO STUDY OPTIONS FOR DISCIPLINARY MEASURES TO BE TAKEN AGAINST VIOLATORS. THE CABINET, HE SAID, WOULD CONSIDER THE ATTORNEY GENERAL'S PROPOSAL TO AMEND THE LAW TO PROVIDE A PENALTY OF TWO YEARS' IMPRISONMENT FOR BOTH THE INFORMANT AND THE PUBLISHER OF SECRET CABINET INFORMATION.

3. ZADOK POINTED TO RECENT INCIDENTS OF LEAKS AS PROOF OF NEED TO CENSOR SENSITIVE POLITICAL AND DIPLOMATIC INFORMATION IN THE SAME WAY THAT CERTAIN DATA ABOUT OIL SUPPLIES, IMMIGRATION, AND FOREIGN AID ARE CURRENTLY SUBJECT TO CENSORSHIP. THIS MIGHT INCLUDE MESSAGES TO ISRAELI LEADERS FROM FOREIGN HEADS OF STATE, SECRET VISITS ABROAD BY ISRAELI OFFICIALS, AND OTHER AREAS IN WHICH SECURITY AND FOREIGN AFFAIRS ARE CLOSELY LINKED. HE CALLED FOR A SPECIAL GOVERNMENT ORDER, TO BE APPROVED BY THE CABINET AND RATIFIED BY THE KNESSET FOREIGN AFFAIRS AND DEFENSE COMMITTEE, TO ENLARGE THE SCOPE OF GOVERNMENT CENSORSHIP.

4. BEGIN LIMITED OFFICIAL USE. COMMENT: ZADOK STATEMENT IS RESPONSE TO LATEST FLAP IN U.S./ISRAELI RELATIONS CAUSED BY LEAK TO ISRAELI PRESS OF PRESIDENTIAL MESSAGE TO RABIN EXPRESSING OPPOSITION TO GOI DECISION TO AUTHORIZE ESTABLISHMENT OF FOUR NEW SETTLEMENTS ON GOLAN HEIGHTS. IT IS WORTH RECALLING, HOWEVER, THAT RABIN AND ALLON ON PREVIOUS OCCASIONS IN 1975 DEPLORED PHENOMENON OF LEAKS AND PLEDGED TO TRY TO RECTIFY THE SITUATION. WHETHER ZADOK PROPOSAL INDEED PRESAGES SERIOUS EFFORT TO CURTAIL LEAKS REMAINS TO BE SEEN. SOME OBSERVERS BELIEVE ONLY REAL SOLUTION IS FOR SENIOR ISRAELI LEADERSHIP TO REFRAIN FROM TAKING HIGHLY SENSITIVE MATTERS TO CABINET.
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